Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors influencing the implementation of clinical guidelines for health care professionals: a meta-review

Version: 3 Date: 23 April 2008

Reviewer: Jako Burgers

Reviewer’s report:

Although the authors has integrated the minor comments well, I still have problems with the added value of the paper. The paper contains a lot of data (Table 5) but does not contribute to an original synthesis of research findings.

1) ‘guidelines should include all relevant health professionals’ (p. 19) was also included as an item in the AGREE Instrument (2001).

2) The discussion on multiple versus single strategies does not provide a real answer on the question ‘which factors positively or negatively affect implementation of guidelines’.

3) Unawareness of a guideline among professionals seems to be an open door. The questions is how this can happen and how awareness can be raised.

4) The issue of comorbidity in patients is a good point, but relevant references are missing, such as Tinetti ME, Bogardus ST Jr, Agostini JV. Potential pitfalls of disease-specific guidelines for patients with multiple conditions. N Engl J Med 2004;351(27):2870-4.

Major compulsory revisions
- The authors should do another attempt to make the paper more attractive by rewrite the Discussion/Conclusion section.
- The heading Conclusion should be changed in Discussion. The heading Discussion could be removed. The text under this heading is a separate paragraph on methodological limitations.
- The English can still be improved. I found the English in the author’s response of better quality than the paper.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I am involved as co-investigator in a review on implementation of Dutch guidelines published since 1990.